DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 348 461 UD 028 834

AUTHOR Alexander, Gary C.
TITLE The Transformation of an Urban Principal: Uncertain Times, Uncertain Roles.
PUB DATE Apr 92
NOTE 32p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (San Francisco, CA, April 20-24, 1992).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrator Attitudes; *Administrator Role; *Educational Change; Elementary Schools; Elementary Secondary Education; *Instructional Leadership; *Leadership Qualities; Leadership Responsibility; Leadership Training; *Principals; Public Schools; *School Based Management; Secondary Schools; Urban Schools
IDENTIFIERS Reform Efforts

ABSTRACT

A study was done on the effect of site-based management (SBM) and change on the role of principals in a large urban school district in the mid-western United States. The study used a distillation of the perceptions reported by building principals faced with the implementation of SBM, a concept of transactional and transformational leadership, and qualitative and quantitative approaches. The study surveyed 56 principals from elementary school through high school level using 2 brief surveys; a 76 percent response rate was received. The surveys were followed by in-depth interviews of 21 representative principals from all grade levels addressing the principals' concerns about change, how they felt their role was changing, and their predictions about the future role of the principal. Findings include the following: (1) the implications of SBM for the role of principal cannot yet be determined; (2) the majority of participants did not espouse transformational leadership; (3) many principals identified a need for training in leadership skills; and (4) principals viewed the emerging role of principals as directors of change. Overall, the results support the need for a clear definition of SBM that considers the vision and needs of the district within the context of each individual school. A bibliography contains 15 entries. (JB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED348461

The Transformation of an Urban Principal: Uncertain Times, Uncertain Roles

Gary C. Alexander

CAREI

University of Minnesota

April, 1992

UD028834

Prepared for presentation at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA, April, 1992.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Gary C. Alexander
University of Minn.
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The Transformation of an Urban Principal: Uncertain Times, Uncertain Roles

Society is demanding changes in schools, changes that are redefining the role of the school principal. One such change, site-based management, asks the principal to assume a new role. This role has yet to be defined. At the same time, implied in site-based management is the concept of shared-decision making or participatory-decision making. This directly challenges the time-honored authority of the principal.

The objectives of the study reported here were originally posed as five questions:

1. What are the implications of site-based management the role of the principal?

2. What are the concerns of principals about how site-based management affects their role as building administrators?

3. To what degree do principals in a large urban school district espouse a transformational leadership style?

4. What expressed skills are needed in the new role of principal as transformational leader?

5. What is the emergent shape of the "new" role of the principal as viewed through the eyes of principals on the cutting edge of change?

Statement of the Problem

This study investigated the implications of an innovation, site-based management, on the role of the principal. The broad context of the study was a large urban school district in the mid-western United States, and the narrower focus was individual principals within the district.

Recent educational reform movements have called for change in schools. One suggested change is site-based management. SBM encourages broadly based responsibility for decision making and school effectiveness. Clune and White (1988), for example, suggest that implicit in site-based management is the concept of participatory-decision making: the belief that better decisions can be made by those closest to the problems--the principals and the teachers. Such decision making also implies a sharing of leadership. At the same time, within society there has been a breakdown of confidence in schools, and now more than ever, schools need strong leadership to address the problems of education. Traditionally, principals have been the providers of leadership. As such, they have not been accountable to anyone but their immediate supervisors, nor have they shared their decision-making. Now, however, new demands from the outside for changes such as SBM make the principal's role unclear. Accordingly, this study examined the implications of change on the role of the principal and how the principal's leadership style is manifested in trying to implement an innovation.

The Conceptual Framework

The goal of this study is to examine the implications of change on the role of the principal. The study took as its method a distillation of the perceptions reported by building principals faced with the implementation of SBM.

Integral to the study was James MacGregor Burns' concept of transactional and transformational leadership. Although Burns (1978) described the differences between these two leadership styles, it was not until closer examination, when these images were applied directly to principals actively involved in change and the change process, that the

concepts of transactional and transformational leadership styles became clarified to the researcher. In short, the more transformational principals reportedly acted as change agents while the more transactional were change resistors or maintainers of the status quo.

Methodology

A combined qualitative and quantitative approach was used to learn the perceptions, feelings, and experiences of the principals and their roles related to the innovation. The basic unit of analysis was the individual building principal. Fifty-six K-12 principals from a large metropolitan school district, the total population at the time of the study, completed two brief surveys. There was a 76 percent response rate. The first survey, W. Burke's Leadership Report (1988), was an eighteen item modified forced-choice questionnaire that examines whether an individual operates under a transformational or transactional leadership style as defined by James MacGregor Burns (1978). The second survey is the thirty-five item Stages of Concern portion of the Concerns-Based Approach Model (CBAM) questionnaire (Hall, George, & Rutherford, 1977). This segment of the CBAM identifies a principal's stages of concern about an innovation. In this instance, the innovation was site-based management.

The surveys were followed by in-depth interviews of 21 representative principals from all grade levels. The transcribed interviews became the primary source of data. The raw data tapes are in the possession of the researcher. As Louis (1982) commented in "Multisite/Multimethod Studies," "A holistic understanding of human social structures and behaviors requires a qualitative, observational based study of individual cases rather than experimental manipulation of

selected variables" (p. 7). Moreover, as Miles and Huberman (1984) point out regarding multi-site or cross-site analysis, "The aim is to increase generalizability, reassuring oneself that the events and processes in one well-described setting are not wholly idiosyncratic" (p. 151). The decision about whom to interview was based on maintaining a balance of principals from each grade level. Therefore, because there were seven senior and seven junior high principals, seven elementary principals were also selected based on their school's geographic location within the city and the type of school. The interviews consisted of a pre-determined set of open-ended questions with designated probes which were utilized to conduct the interviews. The interviews addressed the principals' concerns about change, how they felt their role was changing, and their predictions about the future role of the principal. Information collected by the Metro School District (1990) was also used as supplementary data.

Limitations

The conclusions derived from this study will be subject to the following limitations:

1. This study did not attempt to evaluate the effectiveness, success, or failure of the implementation of site-based management.

2. The study did not consider the characteristics necessary for the successful implementation of site-based management.

3. The study was limited to the K-12 building principals in terms of how they interacted with change and how change affected their perception of their role.

4. Generalizability of the findings is limited as the research population represents only one urban school district.

5. This study is limited by the validity and reliability of the

instruments used and the fact that the principal interviews were self-reported.

6. The study is limited by the statistical methods employed in the analysis of the quantitative data, the reliability of the interviews, and the ability of the researcher to interpret the collected data.

7. The study examined the words of 21 principals. They may be familiar with the literature or may have studied SBM and in reality have not changed to the degree indicated in some instances by their self-reports.

Despite these limitations, the study provides first hand information as reported by principals, about principals who are in the midst of that change.

Summary of Findings

Score Results

The results on the eighteen question Leadership Report (Burke, 1988) survey, which measured transformational versus transactional leadership styles, indicated that for the fifty-six principals surveyed, 77 percent scored were transformational in their leadership style. Of the 21 principals actually interviewed, 67 percent scored as being more transformational. Despite the high percentages of principals who scored as being more transformational on the survey, there was some inconsistency with what they self-reported in their interviews. Many principals used words and descriptions of their behaviors that were suggestive of more transactional behaviors than what the survey results indicated. Therefore, because this particular survey may not yield useful data, it is suggested that if the study is replicated, it not be used. If it is used, it should be re-normed to take into account the apparent social

acceptability bias among educational administrators toward sharing power.

The Stages of Concern (SoC) survey (Hall, George, & Rutherford, 1977) consists of 35 statements, each of which expresses a concern about an innovation. Information from this instrument proved to be very congruent with what the principals self-reported in the interviews. For the 56 participants, scores were broken down into seven stages or groups. The results indicated that the highest areas of concern were in stage zero and stage one. The high stage zero score of 67 percent of the respondents indicated that either they were not implementing the innovation or, if they were, they did not feel concerned about its implementation. That is to say, they were either not attempting to implement SBM; they were not attempting to implement SBM but were saying they were; or they were attempting to implement SBM as mandated by the central office.

A high stage one concern indicated that this group was mostly concerned about status, reward, and the potential or real effects of the innovation on them personally. The combined high scores in stages zero and one indicated that a majority of the 56 principals were mostly concerned with the implications of SBM implementation on them personally and on their careers.

SoC (1977) scores for the interviewed principals supported the results above, but, in addition, this group's second highest score indicated an intense need for more descriptive information about the innovation. They wanted to know what it would do and what implementation would involve. Moreover, they were concerned about management, time, and the logistical aspects of the innovation. This indicates a more transactional

and transitional perspective about the innovation. The SoC (1977) and the interviews reinforced each other in their results.

Definition

An overwhelming majority of the principals responded either that they had no clear understanding of the central office's definition of site-based management or that they were not sure what the central office meant by site-based management. The central office, on the other hand, said they did not want to define SBM because they felt the definition would be restrictive to principal and/or site ingenuity and initiative.

Slightly over half of the respondents acknowledged that the central office expected all players or stakeholders to be involved in the decision-making process, and a clear majority personally defined site-based management as including everyone (teachers, parents, and students) in the decision-making process.

Implementation

Almost half of the principals indicated that the origin of SBM in the district was a result of the new superintendent. One third of the respondents indicated that the origin of SBM was because of the teachers' union. One fifth of the principals considered the origin of SBM to be a result of a former superintendent. A small number of them indicated that the origin of SBM was a result of recent educational research and "the times."

The superintendent expressed that implementation took place because of his own personal philosophy, which matched the philosophy of the school board.

Decision Making in the Schools

Most of the principals stated that teachers are involved with more decisions than in the past. However, about a quarter of the principals believed that decision making had not changed in the schools, and a small number indicated that the previous decision-making process had merely become formalized.

The superintendent indicated that decision making had changed in that greater teacher participation had raised the principals' levels of awareness and sensitivity to the concerns of teachers.

Principals' Role

All of the principals interviewed were aware that their role was changing. Over a third used the word "leader" to describe the evolving principal role, while a third used the word "facilitator" to describe the evolving principal role.

The superintendent saw principals as becoming more leaders of leaders or orchestrators of the involvement of others.

Issues & Problems

Almost one half of the respondents mentioned the increased time involved in SBM as contributing to the changed role of the principal. Over a third of the principals named changing student demographics as the issue that would be most crucial to the changing role of the principal, and about a third indicated that money or resources were significant influences. A small number said the teachers' union has had a significant influence on the changing principal's role.

The superintendent believed that the major problem would be to help the "dinosaurs" adapt.

Teacher Empowerment

Almost half of the respondents indicated that teacher empowerment signaled the end of the school principal's role as we have traditionally known it. Over a quarter of the principals, on the other hand, indicated that teacher empowerment had not ended the need for the principal.

The superintendent indicated that he hoped that teacher empowerment had signaled the end of the principal's position as it has been known. That is interpreted here to mean principal as transactional leader or manager.

Concerns, Fears, & Anxieties

The principals expressed a variety of concerns, fears, and anxieties about the implementation of SBM. Although several expressed that they did not have any fears or concerns, the majority expressed uncertainties that ranged from moving into the innovation too quickly to feelings of isolation. Over half of the respondents indicated that they thought principals were afraid of change, while slightly fewer than half did not think principals were afraid of change but had other concerns. These other concerns included having genuine input into the change process and an awareness of the logistical complications of implementing change.

More than a quarter of the principals indicated that if parameters were set or a clear definition of site-based management were given, it would help to reduce principal concerns. Others expressed the need for support and training for principals and teachers and about a third recommended that in-service or training, teacher and principal forums, constructive feedback, support groups or forums for principals, and additional time would all contribute to reducing principal fears or

concerns about change. A small number of the principals had mixed feelings about the question and could not express an answer either way.

The Metro superintendent believed that the principals were afraid of change and that their fears primarily rested on a lack of self-confidence.

Teachers' Union

A vast majority of the principals stated that the union's role had been very positive in the change process. Only a handful said the union had been negative. A few principals expressed mixed feelings about the union's contribution to the change process.

The Metro superintendent indicated that the union had been extremely helpful in bringing about the innovation.

Vision

Each of the principals had a vision for his or her school. Two thirds replied with answers that were child-centered in the sense that they focused on the child's social, physical, or emotional well being. A little over a quarter of the principals held academic achievement visions for their schools.

The superintendent's vision was the formal vision statement of the district.

Additional Thoughts:

The responses to this question varied with the principal. The question was open ended and asked the principals if there was anything that they would like to add to the interview. Some principals responded and some did not. Most of those that replied discussed the growing sophistication and difficulty of the principal position.

Alternative Perceptions

The responses to this section came from a Metro School District Survey given in April of 1990 which sought certified staff perceptions and opinions on a variety of district related issues, including site-based management. More than 90 percent of the staff responded. Of this percentage, more than three fourths of the staff indicated that they assisted in goal identification and in choosing the direction of their school.

Over half of the teachers wanted more involvement in decisions about budget, while a quarter wanted more involvement only if they had a reduction in other responsibilities. In all areas, between 40 percent and 70 percent of the staff felt their level of involvement was adequate.

Almost all of the staff indicated that they did not want less involvement than at present. The key factor was that a reduced work load was of primary importance to them. A quarter of the respondents were not willing to give more than 1-3 hours a month under any circumstances beyond their normal teaching load.

Conclusions From The Study

This study addressed five related questions previously mentioned. The conclusion considers each in turn.

Question 1: What are the implications of site-based management on the role of the principal?

It cannot be determined yet what the implications of site-based management are or will be for the role of the principal.

The scores of a majority of the fifty-six principals who completed the Leadership Report (Burke, 1988) indicated that they leaned toward a more transformational than transactional leadership style. The interview

results indicated that while SBM had been mandated, only limited shared-decision making had occurred as reported by the principals.

This tendency of principals to score more transformational than transactional may be attributed to a number of things. First of all, the Metro district principal selection process may have been refined to the point where candidates with more transformational leadership styles would naturally be more likely to emerge. Second, the interview results indicated that many of the district principals had received either Minnesota Educational Effectiveness Program (MEEP) training or district training in various aspects of leadership. MEEP is a program originated by the Minnesota State Department of Education designed to provide leadership training to school district personnel. Third, the interview results indicated that many of those principals whose survey scores indicated that they were more transformational than most reportedly had had life experiences and/or training outside of education that enhanced their transformational skills. Fourth, many of these individuals may possess transformational leadership characteristics naturally. Finally, the tendency to have a more transformational than transactional leadership style score could be a function of the instrument and subject responses.

Although transformational principals are risk takers by definition and as such are willing to take chances, the data indicated that they were hesitant about SBM. The principals as a group were struggling with site-based management. Reasons why many of their behaviors have not yet changed may include the lack of a clear definition of SBM, a lack of SBM parameters, lack of clarity about the principal's emerging role, lack of knowledge about how to implement SBM, and the lack of a model to help

them operationalize SBM implementation. The implications of site-based management on the roles of these principals remains to be seen as the implementation process continues to unfold.

Question 2: What are the concerns of principals about how site-based management affects their role as building administrators?

The concerns of principals about how site-based management affected their role as building administrators focused primarily on themselves. They did, however, also express some degree of concern about their teachers and students.

The results of the Stages of Concern (SoC) survey (Hall, George, & Rutherford (1977) and the self-reported interview results indicated that the principals were more concerned about themselves and their role in the change process than with the implementation of site-based management. The researcher interpreted this to mean that the principals were mostly concerned with how the innovation would affect them and their role as principal rather than with the actual mechanics of implementation. Their voiced concerns were about moving to implement SBM too quickly; the role of the central office in the change process; the need for adequate in-service; the involvement of all parties in the process; feeling isolated in the principal's role; and the general uncertainty of their future. In addition, they indicated an intense need for more descriptive information about site-based management to clarify their perceptions of what the central office was mandating.

These results are not surprising given the fact that the principal's role grows increasingly unclear as the sophistication of the position and the demands of society continue to increase. Supporting this is the

evidence supplied by the data that 90 percent of the principals interviewed had no clear understanding of the definition of site-based management. The SoC (1977) results also suggested that the principals were concerned about management, time, and the logistical aspects of the innovation during all phases of the implementation process. The results suggested that even after two years the principals were asking: How are we supposed to implement this? Where will we find more time to implement this? Where will we find the resources and support to implement the innovation?

What they were really expressing was a high degree of anxiety and uncertainty about their evolving role in the change process. Many of these people have been administrators for many years. Their longevity as principals in the district may speak to the district's positive perception of their professional competence. Now the principals feel uncertain about their future; and, in addition, they are being asked not only to implement an unclearly defined innovation, but also to assume new professional roles for which there is no clear definition. All they know is that they are supposed to share building decisions and their authority.

Their concerns, fears, and anxieties about the implementation of SBM were varied. These issues primarily centered around authority, power, and accountability. The principals verbalized that they have been charged with bringing about an organizational transformation in their schools by empowering others to decide how this will be done. Yet these same principals also reported that, in their view, the responsibility for the success or failure of these decisions has not been shared.

Whether real or imagined, principals believe they are held accountable for the success or failure of their schools. They feel that

both their role and the degree of their accountability need to be clarified by the central office. Principals seem to be caught in the middle, expected to relinquish time-honored power and roles.

The researcher sees the principal as the middle person between all the players in the change process and who perhaps must deal with too many factors to bring about the necessary changes. The principals expressed that they would like to be allowed to act more autonomously in collaboration with their staff. They feel that they need to be given the real power and autonomy to implement the innovation mandated.

In short, principals are concerned about their jobs, their role in the change process, their authority, and their accountability in trying to implement SBM.

Question 3: To what degree do principals in a large urban school district espouse a transformational leadership style?

Despite the results on the Leadership Report, results from the SoC and the in-depth interviews suggest that a majority of the principals in this study do not espouse transformational leadership.

Without clear parameters, without a clear understanding of the ultimate outcome, and without a sense of what the emerging role of the implementing individual is to be, it is easy to understand why the principals in this study might struggle with the concept of SBM or strive to demonstrate a more transformational leadership style.

Perhaps the central office consciously avoided a specific definition of SBM in order to provide the flexibility to meet the needs unique to individual schools and communities. On the other hand, as one principal suggested, if there is no shared understanding, the more transactional leader or principal can implement or not implement anything he or she may

want and call it SBM. For the more transformational principal trying to implement such a vague concept, however, it is stressful to say the least. Therefore, as one attempts to arrive at a clear understanding of SBM, the researcher feels the central office must continually consider the degree of site authority and autonomy it provides principals. The principals expressed their need to have a clear vision of what SBM is and, in turn, an ability to communicate that vision in real and implementable terms. Principals feel they are not the enemy of either the central office administration or the teachers. They believe they are, however, professional educators caught in change, trying to cope, perform, and lead the transformation of their schools without a clear understanding of their ultimate role in the newly emerging process.

Educators recognize that their roles are changing. However, rather than take a pro-active role in the change process, some individuals take a "wait and see" attitude about whether an innovation is not just another passing fad. This indicates an uncertainty about the stability of change.

Principals and teachers alike expressed their awareness that their roles have changed. For teachers, the role change may be less dramatic than it has been for principals because teachers' traditional authority roles have not been challenged In an attempt to cling to the past or resist change, some principals may continue to limit the degree of teacher opportunity for greater decision making expected to accompany the implementation of SBM. Clune and White (1988) indicated that three kinds of decisions are typically decentralized in SBM: budget, curriculum, and personnel. Of these three, a majority of principals report that decision making opportunities continue to be limited primarily to curriculum decisions. In fact, this suggests that a majority of the principals

continue to behave more transactionally despite having scored more transformationally on the Leadership Report. They are sharing the decision making in very limited and traditional ways. For this researcher, this may be in part attributed to the fact that they may not know how to share decision making more broadly. Clearly, many principals are struggling both to implement SBM and to gain a sense of their own emerging roles.

Teachers as well as principals may act as resistors to change. Educators have been jostled between major innovations since the 1960's. As a result, any major innovation would be a real challenge to implement. Many people are taking a wait-and-see attitude and are not going to expend energy if SBM is just another fad. As the Metro district survey indicated, many teachers are willing to take only so much additional time from an already busy schedule. This increases the challenge for principals. They not only must change their role, but they must also try to move teachers toward acceptance and participation in a new role. One possible solution to reducing the resistance to change and the stress and lack of confidence often accompanying change may be to increase the skill and training for principals and staff. This may help principals to more readily embrace change and to practice a transformational leadership style.

Question 4: What expressed skills are needed in the new role of the principal as transformational leader?

Principals identified the need for training to enhance their leadership skills and to enhance and enable them to be more transformational leaders. Such identified skills included: conflict

resolution, organizational development, personnel management, consensus building, communication skills, and dealing with the change process.

Several principals expressed the opinion that there has been inadequate in-service and training to prepare principals for the role they are expected to play. They have had some training, but a number of principals indicated that not everyone is able to participate. Specific skills identified by the principals as being needed to assist them in implementing SBM as well as in becoming more transformational leaders are conflict resolution, organizational development, personnel management, and consensus building. In addition, the enhancement of their communication skills would be a definite benefit. The superintendent echoed these sentiments. He felt that university preparation programs dealt "very remotely with the technical, conceptual, and human skills necessary to be a principal."

Accordingly, the researcher feels that today's principals need the type of training that will enable them to adapt their administrative behaviors to situations called for by the needs of their educational community and the dynamics of that community. They must be flexible in their leadership style. They must be willing to embrace the reality that other people in their community of learners have the skills and knowledge to provide leadership as well and to utilize these skills and knowledge for the betterment of the children.

Similarly, principals expressed their desire and need to engage more teachers in the change process. In one instance, a principal expressed that only 20 percent of his staff was active in the implementation of SBM. Better staff participation can occur through greater teachers' union encouragement and training, reduced work loads, and increased

compensation for the additional hours worked. This may also mean lengthening the school year.

Moreover, as indicated above, principals also see the need for training to enhance their leadership skills and to reduce their stress. In the author's opinion there needs to be more and better assessment of principal performance to identify those in need of improvement and in-service. Principals successful at implementing SBM and who are more transformational in their leadership style need to be identified. Those identified may also act as mentors and role models. Together principals and teachers need to develop team building and facilitation skills, communication, and collaboration skills.

The author believes that with the increased sophistication of the principalship, a principal who is uncomfortable with change and ambiguity will also most likely be uncomfortable with the chaos that potentially comes from collaborative planning. Moreover, this principal is going to be a discontented person in the 1990's and beyond because of the constant stress related to the uncertainty of change. The principalship is no longer a concrete role, and those who are resistors to change will need the skills to effect the new role.

Question 5: What is the emergent shape of the "new" role of the principal as viewed through the eyes of principals on the cutting edge of change?

The emergent shape of the "new" role of the principals as viewed through the eyes of principals on the cutting edge of change is that they will become leaders or leaders, facilitators, orchestrators of change, directors of change, and cheerleaders of change.

The consensus of 100 percent of the principals in this study was that their role is changing. They were able to verbalize what their new role as principal should look like. They were able to contrast their traditional role as managers with the growing expectation that they assume the role of change orchestrators. The researcher feels it is questionable, however, whether more than a couple have been able to internalize and implement these perceived new roles.

Principals are being called upon to become engineers of the human potential that has always existed around them in their educational community. To paraphrase one principal, they must develop the skills necessary to promote the self-confidence that they, as leaders of leaders, facilitators, orchestrators, etc., will need to be vulnerable to the people around them and the dynamics that the community may call for. The author sees the need for principals to develop the skills necessary to determine whether a situation calls for more transactional leadership skills or more transformational leadership skills, the ability to identify and know the difference, and the knowledge to implement the appropriate leadership style choice.

DISCUSSION

In addition to the conclusions cited above, there are several issues that also need to be discussed. The first of these issues is concerned with systemic change.

The author feels that for true transformation to take place in a school district it must be systemic. This means that shared-decision making should be modeled by the central office as well as by the principals. Fullan (1982), for example, claimed that what superintendents do at each of the three main phases of change--initiation, implementation,

and institutionalization--significantly affects the success or failure of the proposed change. Secondly, the author believes that greater autonomy must be given to the schools. Gusky (1990) suggests that innovations need to be adapted to individual classrooms and buildings (p. 24). This is because of the uniqueness of each classroom and school. Principals expressed that one of the contributing factors to their confusion about SBM is the role played by the central office. Ironically, while the central office calls for a structure of parallel authority within the buildings of the district, principals and teachers alike cited examples where the central office itself maintains a traditional top-down decision making model (See Metro Federation of Teachers, 1991). Moreover, Cuban (1984) observed that although a district's top-down leadership may be efficient and swift, it is also limited--limited in the sense that a principal at an individual site can still subvert top-down directives. As one principal expressed:

> . . . if a principal is opposed to change, unless they are removed, they can sabotage the change, at least at their site.

In this researcher's opinion this type of behavior could be averted by the central office modeling a more transformational leadership style by including greater principal and teacher participation at the district level of decision making and by increasing building autonomy by allowing for greater building decision making in the budget, curriculum, and staffing areas as suggested by Clune and White (1988). If schools are to be transformed, as the Metro District Vision Statement (1990a) suggests, the author feels that transformation must be visible at all levels. Transformation must be systemic.

A second issue for discussion is the subject of changing student demographics. The number one condition, issue, or problem identified by principals as being a crucial barrier to their role change was student demographics. Their concern in this regard is that educators may be fighting a losing battle by attempting to take on the ills of society in isolation.

Changes in society are often initially felt in schools because the problems of society are brought to school by the children. Today, schools are asked to address and solve many problems of a magnitude that did not previously exist--everything from single-parent families to children born with drug addictions. Schools offer the stability lacking in many households and communities, but at the same time, schools are not necessarily equipped to cope with these problems. They also may have their hands tied by legislation or by various special interest groups so they cannot directly see to the problems and needs of the students. Many principals alluded to the fact that they are often only addressing students' most basic survival needs. They expressed that time and resources are not available to meet students' personal, social, and emotional needs. When helping children survive is the first priority, academic issues become secondary. Society, on the other hand, continues to call for higher academic standards while giving little assistance to deal with the social ills. Principals expressed a need to coordinate and bring parents and community more into the schools. As one principal stated: "Schools are the last surviving institution that comes in contact with kids. What if this fails?"

A third issue for discussion are other barriers that inhibit a principal's ability to change and that may be more directly related to the

principal. For instance, a principal may have no professional knowledge base to assist in dealing with change. Raven (1990) contends that there may be any number of other more personalized barriers to change that relate specifically to administrators. According to Raven (1990), principals may not know how to change. They may not be able to come to terms with the social functions of administrating, i.e., low self-esteem or incompetent self-image. There may be no means to assess change so the administrator is unable to see progress or failure. The principal cannot clearly envision the outcome of the change effort. There may be a lack of sensitive monitoring and facilitation of growth. Finally, Raven states that there may be no tools to assist teachers and principals to individualize the change process.

A fourth issue for discussion is the subject of vision. All of the principals expressed some kind of a vision for their school. Several of the more transformational principals, however, were reportedly more able to link some action to their vision. They reportedly had a better sense of where they wanted to go.

The researcher feels the principals in this study, who hold a vision of what their restructured school would look like, with all the stakeholders participating, are the principals with the greatest likelihood of translating that vision into a shared covenant. They are the principals whose schools would reflect the greatest movement toward shared governance and SBM. As Bass comments:

> . . . the essential characteristic of transformational leaders. . . was the ability to create, articulate, and communicate a compelling vision that induces commitment to it, clarity about it, and support for it. (Bass, 1985, p. 28).

On the other hand, there are those principals in this study who reportedly have had less success in projecting a vision that is workable in their schools.

A final issue for discussion is how principals' leadership styles were manifested in the face of change. Although many principals' scores indicated more transformational leadership styles, their reported behaviors suggested otherwise. In reality, several principals who scored as more transformational on the Leadership Report reported more transactional behaviors such as vetoing group decisions, limiting the areas of and the amounts of participatory-decision making in their schools, and undermining and/or resisting the implementation of site-based management in their schools.

IMPLICATIONS

This study suggests several understandings related to the findings and conclusions. They are as follows:

In the district studied, the central office definition of site-based management is not clear. Because of this, one resounding message from this study is that the principals in the Metro district do not have a clear definition of site-based management nor of the parameters surrounding its implementation. Accordingly, more transactional principals may not readily move toward transformational leadership styles. In addition, a number of principals reported that the lack of clarity enables principals to claim they are transformational leaders, when, in fact, they may not be. The expressed inability and unwillingness of some principals to change suggests several things. The researcher believes one possibility may be that the central office needs to change how it is run in order to model participatory-decision making. Another possibility may be that as part of

this modelling process, the central office and other participants (principals and teachers) need to determine collectively both a district definition of SBM and a model or description of how it should look in the school setting. Besides the importance of defining SBM, the principals also need to better understand their emerging roles and how they experience and are affected by change. This suggests in-service that addresses both the personal and professional implications of change.

In addition, if power, authority, decision making, and the responsibility for decisions are to be shared by teachers and principals, the author feels teachers and principals will need to become partners and will need to support each other in the face of educational change.

Skill development and training need to be made available to enhance the type of skills expressed by the principals as necessary for effecting such changes. School districts, universities, and professional organizations can provide such training.

Principals, teachers, and society must view education and the emergent role of each group from a new perspective if they are to break old traditions and habits. To do this, each of these stakeholder groups, clinging to old views of their individual roles in the education process, must give these old perspectives up for new collaborative visions and roles. The author feels that they must jointly create a new vision that clarifies their new roles. Moreover, they must jointly define what they want education for their children to look like. If a new vision of education cannot be established, it makes it difficult to make a break from old models, methods, and roles.

This new vision will recognize that leadership may be exercised by one individual or a group of individuals. Leaders may not necessarily be

principals. Therefore, principals, as part of their emergent role, need to facilitate the development of leadership in others. This may well be their opportunity to define their new role.

The author believes that no vision can be successfully achieved until society along with educators is willing to address the needs of today's students. Educators will continue to fight a fruitless battle to implement educational reform if the fight is done in isolation. The problems of today's youth are not the problems of schools alone; they are the problems of society and, as such, must be dealt with collaboratively.

Finally, time must be made available for principals and teachers to do justice to the process of educational reform.

Suggestions for Future Research

Should this study be replicated, the researcher suggests only the use of the SoC portion of the CBAM and the interview protocol. The Leadership Report was not found to be that useful in the context of this study. In addition, to strengthen the findings, teachers at each school site should also be surveyed to determine the level of shared-decision making that exists from their perspectives. This would determine whether their views of what is happening in their schools coincide with the view of their principal.

This study examined how principal leadership style can be perceived to be manifested in trying to implement an innovation. The leadership style may have been a function of the innovation. Accordingly, another study could consider whether principal reported styles varied with a different innovation.

Finally, this brings to question which types of innovations are easier or harder to implement in terms of different leadership styles. Are some innovations less threatening than others to principals? What innovations most challenge the traditional roles of administrators and the way school districts are run?

Conclusion

In summary, if principal self-reporting in this study is accurate, the results support the need for a clear definition of SBM that considers the vision and needs of the Metro district within the context of each individual school as has been encouraged by the district. Following this, many participants expressed the need for training that enables them to develop skills for participatory-decision making, skills for creating leadership in others, skills for arriving at a vision of both the roles and the educational mission at individual sites, and skills to address and cope with change. This training must be supported by both the central office and the teachers' union to be successful.

Principals as empowering leaders encourage collaboration and the use of collective knowledge and experience to discover new ways to make schools work better. The author believes that leadership requires an environment in which decision making is decentralized and horizontal communication exists systemically. As the Metro superintendent commented:

> First of all you model the kind of behavior you want and illustrate that you don't necessarily lose your power to influence by changing your style or by allowing others to participate in the decision-making process.

It is the opinion of this author that if schools are to change, they must be restructured. Schools must become organizations that foster shared governance through open communication and that enhance personal and professional improvement to facilitate shared leadership and SBM. They must enable individual and organizational transformation--thus the essence of SBM may be manifested through the expectation and realization of the potential for leadership inherent in every individual.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bass, B. (1985). Leadership and performance beyond expectations. New York: The Free Press.

Burke, W. W., & Associates. (1988). Leadership report. New York: W. Warner Burke Associates, Inc.

Burns, J. (1978). Leadership. New York: Harper and Row.

Clune, W., & White, P. (1988, September). School-based management. Institutional variation, implementation, and issues for further research. (CPRE Research Report Series RR- 008) Center for Policy Research in Education. Washington D.C.: Office of Educational Research and Improvement. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 300 908)

Cuban, L. (1984). Translating the frog into a prince: Effective schools research, policy, and pratice at the district level. Harvard Educational Review, 54(2), 129-151.

Fullan, M. (1982). The meaning of educational change. New York: Teachers College Press.

Gusky, T. (1990, February). Integrating innovations. Educational Leadership, 47(5), 21-25.

Hall, G., George, A., & Rutherford, W. (1977). Measuring stages of concern about the innovation: A manual for use of the SoC questionnaire. Austin, TX: The University of Texas.

Louis, K. S. (1982, October). Multisite/multimethod studies. American Behavioral Scientist, 26(1), 6-22.

Miles, M., & Huberman, A. (1984). Qualitative data analysis: A sourcebook of new methods. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Metro Teachers Union. (1991, January/February). Site-based management (SBM) - shared-decision making (SDM) survey. Metro Teacher, 42(11), p. 4.

Metro School District (1990a). School transformation: A vision for the Metro Public Schools. MN: Board of Education.

Metro School District. (1990b, September). Staff perceptions and opinions about Metro Public Schools. MN: Board of Education.

Metro School District. (1990c, October). Report of the annual sight count of students. MN: Board of Education.

Raven, J. (1990). The barriers to achieving the wider goals of general education. The British Educational Research Journal, 16(3), 273-296.